



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment

Survey site:

Furzefield, Honeybridge Lane, Ashurst, Steyning, Horsham, West Sussex BN443AW

Client:

Adam Cove

Survey date:

20/03/2026

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Horsham District Council. This proposal can be described as "Demolition of three barns and construction of new building"

The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion

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Introduction and Context

Introduction

The aim of the PEA was to obtain data on existing ecological conditions, and to conduct a preliminary assessment of the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development. The aim of the PRA was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of the presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how bats could use the site for roosting, foraging or commuting.

No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author's knowledge, by any other consultancy.

Methodology

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

Limitations

Whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report is a preliminary assessment and does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. Nor does it represent a full botanical assessment. It assesses the likelihood of protected, notable and important habitats and species being present, based on a site and landscape level habitat value-based risk assessment. This is based upon the ecology, biology and known distribution of species as currently understood.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

Results, Impacts and Recommendations

Site Location and Landscape Context

Table 1: Site location and landscape context

Site Location
The site is located at National Grid Reference TQ 16417 16306 and has an area of approximately 0.049ha comprising three stable buildings and associated developed land; sealed surface.
Priority Habitats and Designated Sites
Summary of Survey Findings <u>Priority Habitats</u> There are three priority habitats located within 2 km of the site. These comprise deciduous woodland, traditional orchard and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. The closest priority habitat comprises deciduous woodland, located ~130 m south of the site. The site is well connected to biodiverse habitats in the wider landscape, including grassland, pockets of woodland and networks of hedgerows. <u>Designated Sites</u> There are no other statutory sites within 2 km of the site. The site does fall within the impact risk zone for Chanctonbury Hill SSSI however, the proposed development type is not listed as possible high risk with regard to this designation. The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from the local records centre. Whilst some habitats in the wider landscape may host designations, the immediate environs of the site do not host habitats likely to be of designable quality. Impacts No direct impacts to any designated sites will occur as a result of the proposed development, due to the small scale and low overall impact of the development from such sites (where known), alongside additional factors such as distance in combination with connectivity

disrupting barriers.

Recommendations

No recommendations.

Habitats and Flora

The site survey was undertaken by Chantae Bleakman-Wells BSc(Hons), MSc, MRSB, Senior Ecologist (Accredited Agent to Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2025-86119-CL18-BAT).

Table 2: Survey weather conditions

Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
20/03/2026	13.6	64	51	14.8	None

Table 3: Habitats and flora

Habitats and Flora: Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations <i>This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.</i>
Onsite habitats Summary of Survey Findings <u>Developed land; sealed surface (u1b)</u> The stable buildings are surrounding by a concrete slab. In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, this habitat is not subject to a condition assessment and is automatically assigned a poor condition. <u>Building (u1b5)</u> There is one building on site, which is used as an out-building. Full details for buildings on site are included within Table 4.

Impacts

No direct impacts to any notable habitats are anticipated. Indirect impacts such as pollution may occur to nearby woodland.

Recommendations

Best practice to minimise the risk of pollution to the nearby woodland must be followed during construction.

Invasive / Non-native species

Summary of Survey Findings

No non-native invasive or otherwise problematic plants were recorded on site or are considered likely to be on site, but, given seasonal limitations and the sites wider context, may be visible at other times of year.

Impacts

None

Recommendations

None.

Fauna

Table 4: Fauna

Fauna: Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations

This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

Roosting Bats

Summary of Survey Findings

A review of the MAGIC database for European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) for bats within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. 1 EPSL was identified, as detailed below:

Table 4a: EPSL records within 2km of the site - bats

EPSL reference	Bat species affected	Distance from site	Impacts allowed by licence
2020-48623-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle	~1.3km south-west	Destruction of a resting place

Buildings

Building B1-B3 Description

The buildings are three, timber built, disused stables (B1-B3). The buildings are detached, single-storey, timber-framed out-buildings that are currently used for storage. The structures have pitched roofs comprised of corrugated sheeting. **No bat evidence was found** anywhere within the buildings. Further photographs are available in Appendix 4.

In line with Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J (Ed) 2023), B1 is assessed to have **negligible habitat value** for roosting bats due to a lack of suitable roosting features for bats and no direct evidence of bats was observed during the survey.



B1-B3



B1-B3

Impacts

The risk to bats is low, as no suitable roosting features for bats were identified.

Recommendations

The demolition of the buildings will be timed to take place when bats are least likely to be present; November to March. As the building is unsuitable for hibernation due to unstable temperature and humidity regimes, this means that the likelihood of disturbing a bat is extremely low.

In the unlikely event that a bat is found, work will stop and the ecologist will advise on how to proceed.

Foraging and Commuting Bats

Summary of Survey Findings

There are no habitats within the site boundary which could be used for foraging bats. There is good quality foraging and commuting habitat within the local area, including within the wider land ownership boundary.

Impacts

The proposed development will not result in the removal of any habitats which could be used by foraging or commuting bats.

Recommendations

None.

Amphibians

Summary of Survey Findings

A review of MAGIC database found no granted EPSL for great crested newts (GCN) within 2km of the site.

A check was also completed for great crested newt class survey license returns and historic pond surveys. No records were identified.

The concrete and buildings are unsuitable for amphibians. There is no suitable aquatic or terrestrial habitat within the site boundary. Surrounding grassland in the wider land ownership boundary provides suitability for commuting amphibians.

Impacts

The proposed development will not result in the loss of any suitable habitat for amphibians. When completing the rapid risk assessment published by Natural England (Natural England 2015), the proposed development produces a 'Green' risk score, which states: 'offence highly unlikely'.

Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to great crested newts, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians during construction, including the following measures:

- Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent amphibians from utilising these areas.

- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any common amphibians are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.
- In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Reptiles

Summary of Survey Findings

The concrete and buildings are unsuitable for reptiles. There is no suitable terrestrial habitat within the site boundary. Surrounding grassland provides suitability for commuting and foraging reptiles.

Impacts

Transient reptiles may be present for short periods of time. Heavy machinery could result in the death or injury of reptiles, if present.

Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to reptiles, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for widespread reptiles during construction, including the following measures:

- Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent reptiles from utilising these areas.
- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby habitats.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

Birds

Summary of Survey Findings

The buildings provide suitable nesting opportunities for birds.

Due to the small size of the site and the extent and type of the habitats recorded, the site not considered suitable to support a significant assemblage of protected and/or notable birds.

Impacts

The buildings will be removed during demolition. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local bird populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, the proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.

Recommendations

Any building removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.

Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests, depending on species present, until the young have fledged.

Badgers

Summary of Survey Findings

There is no suitable terrestrial habitat for badgers within the site. No badger setts were noted on site or within a 30m radius of the site, where accessible. No evidence of badgers was found on site. The surrounding grassland does provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat. As such, the presence of foraging, commuting, and sheltering badgers on site cannot be discounted.

Impacts

No works will be undertaken within 30m of a known badger sett. Construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present.

Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to badgers, further badger surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.

- Any pipework exceeding 150mm will be capped overnight.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which badgers could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Riparian animals

Summary of Survey Findings

There are no riparian habitats on or adjacent to the site.

Impacts

Otters

No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.

Water Vole

No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.

Recommendations

Otters

None.

Water Vole

None.

Hazel dormouse

Summary of Survey Findings

There are no suitable habitats on site to support hazel dormice.

Impacts

No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.

Recommendations

None.

Invertebrates**Summary of Survey Findings**

The site provides limited habitat value for a variety of commonplace species but is unlikely to support important species and assemblages.

Impacts

No impacts are anticipated.

Recommendations

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for invertebrates:

- Incorporation of bee bricks into the fabric of the new building. These should be installed 0.5m above ground level on a south-facing elevation with no obscuring vegetation
- Creation of rock and brash piles

Other e.g. small mammals**Summary of Survey Findings**

Although the habitats within the site are sub-optimal for small mammals, the surrounding grassland and hedgerows provide suitable habitat for small mammals. As such, the presence of foraging, sheltering and commuting small mammals on site cannot be discounted.

Impacts

Construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.

Recommendations

A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Any pipework exceeding 100mm will be capped overnight.

- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any small mammals are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

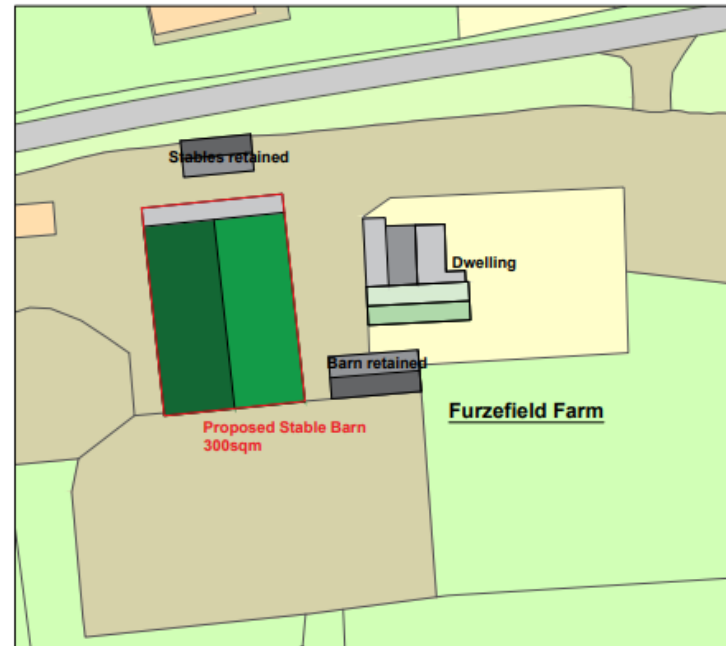
The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the wider land ownership boundary which would be beneficial for hedgehogs:

- Creation of brash piles
- Installation of hedgehog houses in shady areas.

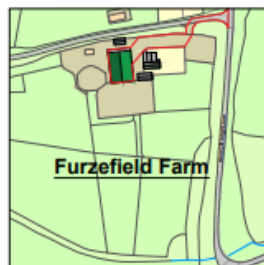
Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



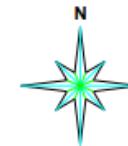
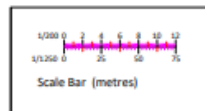
Block Plan - as Existing
Scale 1:200



Site Plan - as Proposed
Scale 1:200



Location Plan
Scale 1:1250



Project:	Proposed Stable Barn at Furzeffield Farm, Honeybridge Lane, Ashurst (B345 3AH)		
Drawing Title:	Location Block and Site Plans		
Scale:	As shown @ A1 Date: 18.02.2025		
Drawing No:	303.26.03	Rev:	-
Drawn By:	WGS		
Client:	Adam Cove		

Drawing for Planning Purposes Only

Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3: Habitat/PRA Survey Plan



Appendix 4: Site Photographs







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Version Control

Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Chantae Bleakman-Wells BSc(Hons), MSc, MRSB, Senior Ecologist	26/03/2026
Final	1.0	Chantae Bleakman-Wells BSc(Hons), MSc, MRSB, Senior Ecologist	26/03/2026